

# JUSTICE ON TRIAL

E/16927/ Ahmedabad

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(Re.) 079-26851133, M: 9825955797

Dated: 2-2-2006.

To,  
His Excellency the Governor of Gujarat,  
Raj Bhavan, Gandhinagar.

## INTERIM REPORT OF FACT FINDING COMMITTEE

On receiving different contradictory reports regarding Shabri Kumbh Mela, Dang dated 11 to 13-2-2006, the "Justice On Trial" (in short JOT), an N.G.O., constituted a Fact Finding Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri. G.S. Gill (Add. Advocate General, Rajasthan). Other Members of the Committee are: Shri. Y.N. Karanjia, Dramatist, Educationist, winner of Gujarat Gaurav Award etc. from Surat; Smt. Nafeesa Hussain, a social activist and ex-Member of National Women's Commission; Capt. M.K. Andhare, social activist from Ahmedabad (as Member-Secretary); Smt. Manisha Joshi, Convener, Women Wing, JOT.

This Committee visited Dang area from 30-1-2006 to 1-2-2006. The Committee met approximately more than 100 local inhabitants including 5 Dangi Rajas and other eminent persons of Dang area. Committee also met with office bearers of C.N.I. (Church of Northern India) and Father Isaacs of St. Xavier's Church as well as with the organizers of Shabri Kumbh such as Shri. Kishorbhai, General Secretary and Shri. Kailash Chand Sharma, President, Shabri Kumch Samaroh Aayojan Samiti. The Committee also made certain relevant queries from District Administration including Police Officers.

### The facts in issue:

- (1) Faith / Religion of the Dangi inhabitants.
- (2) Mythological truth about existence of Shabri and Ram Katha including Pampa Sarovar etc.
- (3) Communal harmony and effect of Shabri Kumbh.
- (4) Effect of Shabri Kumbh on ecology and environment.
- (5) Sanitation and health.
- (6) Development Projects and their effects.

### CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE:

(1) Faith / Religion of the Dangi inhabitants:  
The Committee enquired from the Dangi inhabitants about their festivals and Gods etc. It was told that Dipavali, Holi, Dussera, Akshay Tritiya, Donger Dev, Shabri Mela, Vagh Dev Pooja, Nag Dev Pooja etc. About gods and goddesses,

Shri Ram, Hanuman and Donger Devta were told their Lords, Shabri Mata, Anjani Mata, Seeta Mata, Annapurna Mata among their goddesses.

From above facts there remains nothing to doubt about the faith of the Dangis which is undisputedly Hindu faith.

**(2) Mythological truth about existence of Shabri and Ram Katha including Pampa Sarovar etc.:**

Dangi People were asked about their religious history and religious places of the Dangi area. Anjani Kund, Pampa Sarovar, Seeta Van, Pandav Gufa and Chamak Donger were their old religious places and it was told that Shabri, who was daughter of a royal family, denounced the world due to a wrong ceremony during her marriage and left her home. She became a disciple of Matang Rishi and Bhagvan Ram came to meet Shabri during his exile and on the way in search of Seeta. When it was asked who was Shabri, a girl (middle passed) emphatically told that she was of our caste. When again asked that what she meant by caste, then she told, Dangi and again explained that Dangi means who is born in Dang and whose forefathers also belonged to Dang. On querring about Matang Rishi, they indicated the place near Pampa Sarovar as the temple of Matang Rishi. This temple still exists and it is being renovated. This Committee visited Pampa Sarovar also which is a natural lake surrounded by rocks and ancient one. The Sarovar which we saw cannot be man-made.

In the Dang District Govt. Gazette it is mentioned that the Dang name itself is related to the Dandakaranya of the Ramayana. It is mentioned in the gazetteers that during the exile, Rama passed through this area en-route to Nasik. This version gets confirmation from the fact that the Dangis understand the story of Ramayana very well and their folk songs are replete with the incidents of that epic although their several places are associated with Rama and Seeta in one way or the other such as Seeta Van, Anjani Kund etc. In another Govt. publication of 1978, titled as "Dang: Ek Samyak Darshan", it is mentioned, "Descendents of Shabri have been staying in this area since time immemorial. That Shabri who served tasted berries to Rama is live in memory of the inhabitants. The area from Baldipada to Subir of Dang is one which is known as Shabri Van."

This Committee took photographs and videography of all the places visited and discussions made. From the above facts, the Committee came to the conclusion that Pampa Sarovar is ancient one and story regarding visit of Ram not only efflux from the lok-geet and belief of the local inhabitants, but also gets corroboration from the places which the local people believe to be their religious places since ancestral time.

**(3) Communal harmony and effect of Shabri Kumbh:**

It was told by the Christian Missionaries that at present 20% of the total Dangi population belongs to Christian faith. 17 denominations of the Christians are working in Dangi area and out of 311 villages, Christians reside in 189 villages although the concentration is only in about 11 of them. There are approximately 115 churches out of which 24 are pucca ones, rest are kachcha or zonpdi-type. It was told by the Christian people as well as the Christian

Missionaries that the people of this area are peace-loving and there is no likelihood regarding their safety and security from the Dangi Hindus but they told that due to 1998 incidences, there is apprehension that as number of people are coming from the different parts of India, there may be certain happenings. When it was asked whether any incident which may indicate likelihood, has happened in last six months, the answer was in negation. Father Isaacs told that though till today no single incident occurred but certain pamphlets are distributed that creates the doubt. When it was asked, whether he has that pamphlet, he told that he has not seen but Mr. Sampson Christian of Ahmedabad has produced to the District Administration. On this point, District Administration was asked and it was told by the District Collector that the pamphlet relates to 2002 and no fresh pamphlet is distributed. District Administration was also asked that as the Christian population is scattered in a number of villages, and as the persons from different areas having their different temperaments are coming to Dang, have they properly planned to eradicate the possibility of any mishappening. District S.P. told that he and the Govt. itself are too vigilant. Whole District is divided into 3 zones. Subir Zone where this Shabri Kumbh is going to take place is further divided into 16 sectors. For each sector a mobile party is also going to be deployed in addition to the force going to be deployed in each village where even a single Christian resides. District Administration was also asked that due to 1998 incidents, there is bonafide apprehension in the minds of the Christians. District S.P., relying on the police records, told that about Christian-Hindu conflicts/quarrels, 37 cases were registered in 1998 out of which, in 7 cases, compromise was made between the parties, 8 cases were found false during investigation, in 12 cases the Court has acquitted the accused, 10 cases are pending trial. It was also told that most of the cases were lodged under offences punishable under rioting, simple assault and s. 336 and 337 of I.P.C., which areailable in nature. It was also told that most of the cases were within blood-relationship, rest were relating to burning of fodders, throwing of stone etc. during rioting. It was also told by the S.P. that no case of Christian-Hindu quarrel was registered in the year of 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2005 and only 1 case was registered in the year 2004 in which investigation is pending.

Christian Missionaries as well as local administration told that meeting of peace committee used to take place regularly and at present District Collector is taking visit at an interval of fortnight regularly and the Christians are assured about their security. When it was asked to the Christian activists whether they have proper interaction with the local administration, they showed their utter satisfaction. Dangi Rajas were also asked about communal harmony, they unanimously told, "We are not going to hurt the sentiments of anybody and we are not against solemnizing of the religious rites of any religion but we appeal to all that at present nobody should create any disturbance during the pious Shabri Kumbh.

From the above facts and the interaction made by the inhabitants and representatives of Dangi are, the Committee is of the opinion that there is communal harmony in the Dang and there is no likelihood of communal

conflicts. Only the outsiders are trying to highlight the issue, on their own, perhaps with ulterior motives. It was also observed by the Committee that 1998 incidents got highlighted in press in aggravated form.

**(4) Effect of Shabri Kumbh on ecology and environment:**

The Committee visited almost all the sites where the main function is going to be organized as well as the places where different nagars are to be established for pilgrims. No trace was found that even a single tree was cut. At Chamak Dongri it appears that certain trees might have been removed, so we asked from the District Administration. It was told that in 2002, 31 trees were cut in which Forest Dept. took the action and FIR was also registered. At present no tree was cut. Central Committee from the Forest Dept. also visited the area but nobody could indicate even a single incident of tree-cutting. This Committee surprisingly found that a tree was coming in the way of renovating the temple of Matang Rishi, at Pampa Sarovar but design of the temple was changed just to save that tree. This Committee observed that no tree was cut for organizing the Shabri Kumbh.

**(5) Sanitation and health:**

Approximately 2,600 temporary toilets are constructed keeping in view the sanitation problem. Necessary steps are taken to maintain the same. District Administration has issued a notification regarding non-using of polythene bags. The organizing committee has arranged for different hospitals and dispensaries including mobile vans and ICUs where approximately 250 doctors shall be available at one time. Approximately more than 10,000 volunteers are coming to serve from different societies such as Asaram Bapu Ashram, Swaminarayan Ashram, VHP etc. In addition to it, District Administration has also arranged for the required medicines and staff keeping in view any health hazards during Shabri Kumbh.

**(6) Development Projects and their effects:**

This Committee also visited the places and it was found that the roads are being renovated and certain check-dams are being made. District Administration told that in previous six years, approximately 1,500 check dams have been made for the benefits of local inhabitants. This Committee saw approximately 50 check dams and found that height of the check dams is much lower than the height of the river-bans and there is no likelihood of any overflow resulting in submerging of fields of the farmers or the trees. The inhabitants told with rejoice that due to these check dams, availability of drinking water for human beings, cattle and birds is assured. In addition, water will be available for agricultural purpose which not only improves the financial condition of farmers but will check the migration problem. This Committee also visited certain fields where due to these check dams, crop of wheat was grown and we found it in very good condition. The inhabitants told that due to renovation of roads and construction of new roads alongwith laying of electric lines, the life has become more easier. The Committee is of the view that by the different development projects and construction of check dams, the economic condition of the Dangi people shall drastically change.

The Committee also took certain photographs, CD of which will be sent later on.

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G.S. Gill.  
(M 094140 23297)

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Justice S.M. Soni (Retd.)  
Chairman, Justice On Trial (N.G.O.)

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